

Spiritual Formation in Worship, Part 3: Listening Prayer — Leader's Guide

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From the Missional Bible Studies series of the Center for U.S. Missions

Needed for this Bible study:

Watch with a second hand

A cross or candle (and a match) which all can see (cross or candle, not the match)

You may want to share the following quick review with the participants in this study before moving to the Introduction. Previous participation in classes 1 and 2 isn't necessary, but this brief re-cap would be helpful for those who have missed or slept through previous studies. As always, this Leader's Addendum complements and clarifies the Participant's Guide; use both in leading the study. Reviewing both Guides before the study will help you anticipate questions and reactions.

Review

In Bible study #1, we explored practicing the Presence of Christ throughout worship, setting our hearts and minds on Christ. In Bible study #2, we studied practicing the Presence in our coming together into the Lord's presence (the Lord be with you!); praising God (Alleluia!); and receiving God's blessing (The Lord bless you and keep you!) by *breathing with* the words of Scripture. Now we move yet deeper into the Spirit who prays in us, for us, and with us (Rom. 8:26-27) through the spiritual discipline of listening for God's word to us within a worship context.

Introduction – 2 minutes

Exploration – 30 minutes

Note: The "Application" portion of this Bible study is the Listening Prayer Exercises. **Give participants space in time as well as physical space to move into and out of prayer.** This study was planned specifically for an unrushed atmosphere – all three segments can be explored and implemented in well under an hour. Also, don't try to pray with the group and also keep time – it would be a good idea to try the exercises at home with a timer (a microwave timer works in a pinch) so that you, too, get a sense of how long 30 seconds, a minute, and two minutes in concerted prayer feels.

Below are NIV translations of portions of study passages with added emphases.

I. Listening with One's Whole Heart.

- 1 Sam. 1:9-16 Hannah...kept on praying to the Lord...

- Job 13:20-22, and 31:35 ...let me speak, and you reply; Oh, that I had someone to hear me! I sign now my defense – let the Almighty answer me

- Hab. 2:1 I will stand at my watch . . . ; I will look to see what he will say to me

- Matt. 6:10 thy kingdom come, thy will be done

II. Listening to God Speak through the Words of Scripture

- Matthew 4:4 Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God. - John 4:34 My food . . . is to do the will of him who sent me

- John 5:19 ...the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing...

III. Listening through Silence.

- Psalm 46:10 Be still, and know that I am God
- Psalm 130:5-6 ...My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning
- Psalm 131 ...I have stilled and quieted my soul...
- Romans 8:26-27 ...We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

Discussion – all the time left

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Accompanying Participant's Guide is also available from the Center for U.S. Missions.